

Michigan LEGWORK

Department of Labor & Economic Growth

July 2004

Governor Names Patrick Cannon State ADA Coordinator

GOVERNOR JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM has selected Patrick Cannon, state director of the Michigan Commission for the Blind (MCB), Department of Labor & Economic Growth, to serve in the newly created position of state Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinator. He will continue as MCB director.

The coordinator's position was created by Governor Granholm under Executive Order 2004-31, signed June 3, 2004. Pat will serve as the state's primary liaison with departments and agencies on matters of compliance with state and federal disability rights laws. ADA coordinators will be designated for each state department and will work in conjunction with Pat. The Office of the State Employer will retain primary responsibility for compliance with state and federal disability rights laws on matters relating to state employment. (For the full text of Executive Order 2004-31, go to the following Web address: <http://www.michigan.gov/gov>.)

"Pat's ceaseless dedication to promoting the abilities of people with disabilities and his many years of service in the disability

rights arena will serve the state well," the Governor said. "My administration is one of inclusion and engagement, dedicated to capturing the best thinking and ideas of all of our citizens, including people with disabilities."

Pat served as director of the Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns for 10 years, where he was instrumental in gaining passage of the 1990 amendments to the Michigan Handicappers' Civil Rights Act and advocated for enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act. He was appointed by President Clinton in 1995 to the U.S. Access Board, an independent federal regulatory agency whose mission is accessibility for people with disabilities. He served as chair in 1997 and 1998 and was reappointed for a second four-year term in 1999.



"Access Activists" Will Help Communicate Disability Information

The Department of Labor & Economic Growth is taking steps to become a model department of accessibility.

A workgroup called "Access Activists" has been formed to help DLEG employees better understand the letter and spirit of disability access laws so that all bureaus can fully meet their responsibilities.

"Our first goal is to communicate to DLEG employees the significance of having Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS),

the Michigan Commission for the Blind (MCB), and the Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns (MCDC) within our department," said David Callanan, director of the Office of Media Technology and Access Activists chair. "Our ultimate goal is to make a significant contribution toward Michigan becoming a state government that is fully accessible by people with disabilities."

On the agenda for the summer is the taping of a Consumer's Corner TV program featuring

MRS State Director Jaye N. Balthazar, MCB State Director Patrick Cannon and MCDC Executive Director Duncan Wyeth. They will discuss services available from their respective agencies as well as the importance of disability access.

Workgroup members include Myrtle Gregg-LaFay, Office of Human Resources; Steve Kline and Lynda Robinson, Media Technology; and Lynne Breen, Lori Donlan, Susan Turney and Jeannie Vogel, Media & Public Relations.

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Articles/photos may be e-mailed to breenl@michigan.gov or faxed to 517/241-1580. The Department of Labor & Economic Growth is an equal opportunity employer/program. This newsletter will be made available in alternate formats on request.



UIA Staff Help Detroit Woman Receive Very Belated Mother's Day Gift

How many times have you blamed the U.S. Postal Service for the late delivery of a greeting card or an overdue bill payment?

Recently, a West Coast woman had a legitimate reason for blaming the mail for a Mother's Day card and gift that had not reached her mother in Detroit for more than a year. But she also had to thank the sharp eyes and concern of some Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) staff for the fact that the card and gift got there at all.

Juanita Mayes, a UIA examiner, was recently opening mail that had been returned to the agency's TRA/TEUC office in Detroit as undeliverable because of inaccurate mailing addresses. Stuck in the stack of mail was an envelope with a May 2, 2003, postmark that obviously did not belong to UIA.

Juanita opened the envelope and discovered a Mother's Day card with a \$100 bill tucked inside. Juanita spoke to Debra Singleton, her supervisor, about the find and was given the go-ahead to track down the person to whom the

card and money were intended.

Juanita and co-worker Loretta Davis-Brazil began searching the Internet and located the woman. With belated card and cash in hand, they personally delivered them to the 92-year-old Detroit woman, whose daughter had sent her the card over a year earlier.

The woman and her son were clearly surprised. The son, in fact, had had doubts that his sister had ever sent the card in the first place. The sister, who lives in California, was relieved and glad to be vindicated.

The card *was* in the mail. It just made a detour to the UIA, where some honest and caring staff made sure it reached its intended destination.



Juanita Mayes (left) and Loretta Davis-Brazil made sure a 92-year-old Detroit woman received her very belated Mother's day card and gift.

Department Loses Two Valued Employees

Cynthia Joy Green

On June 14, 2004, Cynthia (Cindy) Joy Green, a long-term employee, treasured friend and co-worker at the Public Service Commission, passed away. At the time of her passing, Cindy was the executive secretary and administrative assistant in the Customer Support and Motor Carrier Division of the commission. For the past 26 years, many of us had the pleasure of working with Cindy. Cindy's experience at the commission was both extensive and diverse; she worked in technical areas including scientific research and evaluation, administratively challenging assignments, such as orders and dockets, and finally in a customer-service-oriented unit. Cindy was sought after for her editing and organizational skills and was always a kind and thoughtful friend and co-worker. Cindy was devoted to her son Ryan and grandson Jordan. She is also survived by other beloved and devoted family (two brothers and four sisters) and many friends. Cindy will be missed.

Debra A. Hiltner

Debra (Deb) A. Hiltner, a secretary with the administrative office of Michigan Rehabilitation Services for the past 25 years, passed away June 15, 2004, after a long and courageous battle with cancer. Deb was known for her sweet nature and as someone who strived for excellence. She was born November 20, 1953, to Robert and Faye Seeger of Muskegon. She earned an associate's degree from Muskegon Community College and was a graduate of Michigan State University's Veterinary Technician program. She is survived by her parents; sons Wesley and Steven, both of Grand Ledge; sister Michelle of Muskegon; and brother David and sister-in-law Theresann of Chicago; three nephews; many caring friends; and her beloved pets Jasmine and Floyd. A memorial service was held at St. Francis De Sales Church in Muskegon. Contributions in Deb's memory may be made to Hospice of Muskegon/Oceana Counties or to the Capital Area Humane Society. She will be missed.

Office of Financial and Insurance Services' Employees Thanked for State Service

Office of Financial and Insurance Services (OFIS) Commissioner Linda A. Watters recently thanked more than 100 OFIS employees who have 10, 20, 30, 40 or more years of service to the state of Michigan and presented them with plaques of appreciation.

Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG) Director David C. Hollister joined in the joyous ceremony, which was held at the Michigan Library auditorium, and also thanked the employees for their dedicated state service, especially during the years of lean state budgets.

Marian Kleinfelt is the OFIS employee with the most years of service — 44! She currently works in the Insurance Licensing Division. During her career she has worked in a variety of positions in the Agriculture, Insurance and Health departments. She also took time to have two children. "I can honestly say I have enjoyed the majority of my years," Marian said.



Kristie Taber (left), manager of the Communications Center and Consumer Assistance Section, and Regan Johnson, regulation specialist in the Conduct Review & Securities Division, were two of more than 100 OFIS employees thanked recently for their years of state service.

Following the presentations, Commissioner Watters hosted a reception in the atrium of the library, where employees enjoyed cake and punch.

Workers' Comp Continues to Reduce Its Paperwork

The Compensation Advisory Organization of Michigan (CAOM) has agreed to start transmitting information electronically to the Workers' Compensation Agency through the agency's Electronic Data Interchange (EDI).

The CAOM is a rating bureau for the state's workers' compensation insurance industry and keeps policy information about employers for future insurance rating purposes. All workers' compensation policies are filed with the CAOM, which will now electronically submit proof of insurance coverage (POC) information to the agency through EDI.

In 2003, the agency processed 233,000 POC forms and estimates that it will eventually eliminate up to 90 percent of these hard copy forms through the use of EDI. Currently, agency staff must open, sort and microfilm the forms as they arrive. Then the information must be data-entered into the agency's mainframe.

Earlier this year, the agency started using EDI to accept electronic filings of 114 forms, which contain data about cost of living adjustments, paid on certain workers' compensation claims.



Those who worked on the CAOM project are, l. to r., Kate Cermak, Satish Chidura, Lori Raby, Bill Hogan, Lori Jenkins and Cheryl Cornellier. Not pictured: Roger Boog, Greg VanHouten and Kathy Rademacher.

Working on the project were Roger Boog, Kate Cermak, Satish Chidura, Cheryl Cornellier, Bill Hogan, Lori Jenkins, Lori Raby, Kathy Rademacher, and Greg VanHouten.

Employment Service Agency Lends Support at Homeless Veterans Stand Down

Fourteen staff members with the Employment Service Agency's (ESA) Customer Service Division helped make the Capital Area Homeless Veterans Stand Down on May 19 a big success.

Held at the Michigan Vietnam War Memorial near the Hall of Justice in Lansing, the daylong event drew some 300 attendees; about 30 percent were identified as homeless veterans. The attendees were given employment assistance, benefits screenings, Social Security assessments, health screenings, legal services, clothing vouchers, haircuts and a hot lunch.

Many community agencies co-sponsored the Stand Down, including Capital Area Michigan Works!, the American Legion, the Greater Lansing Homeless Resolution Network, and the Ingham County Department of Veterans Affairs.

"We had a booth where people were given information about our agency's services and referrals to veterans employment specialists in the mid-Michigan area for individual counseling," said Ron Fairnot, ESA veterans employment specialist and a member of the Stand Down Planning Committee. "We also had a computer lab staffed in the Michigan Library and Historical Center ready to assist the veterans seeking employment and vocational guidance."

Ron said veterans at the computer lab were assigned an on-site veterans employment specialist to assist with their job-seeking needs and given referrals to other veterans' support services. They were also registered in the Michigan Talent Bank (MTB) and given copies of their MTB resume to use for future job referrals. In addition, ESA staff called ahead to potential employers to promote veterans who have the skills these companies require.

ESA employees assisting with the Stand Down, in addition to Ron Fairnot, were Ron Belcher, Jeff Eagle, Kimberly Harvey, James Robinson, Michael West, Ron Ross, Joe Swyrtek, Greg Smith, Jerry Merrell, Ramon Coutinho, Joe Gabelsberger, David Marin and Scott Creswell.



David Marin (left), disabled veterans outreach worker with ESA's Project MOVE, and Ron Fairnot, veterans employment specialist, Lansing, were volunteers at the Stand Down.



Joe Swyrtek (left) and Ron Ross (right) host a radio show for veterans in southeastern Michigan every Wednesday on WPON (1460 AM), sponsored by the Department of Labor & Economic Growth. At the Homeless Veterans Stand Down, they interviewed Darwin Krieger (center), state commander, the American Legion, Department of Michigan. The interview was broadcast on the "Veterans Hour" that same afternoon. (See "What's Cool at DLEG," page 6, for more about this radio program.)



What Is a Stand Down?

Stand down is a military term for soldiers resting from battle. Today, Stand Down refers to a grassroots, community-based intervention program to help the nation's 275,000 homeless veterans combat life on the streets. The "hand up, not a hand out" philosophy of Stand Down is carried out through the work of hundreds of volunteers and organizations throughout the country. The first Stand Down was held in San Diego in 1988.

What's Cool at DLEG

Tune in to Captin' Ron and G.I. Joe

With so many Americans being called to active military duty, it is comforting to know that our returning veterans in southeastern Michigan have a friend in Ron Ross and Joe Swyrtek.

Ron and Joe are better known over the airwaves as Captin' Ron and G.I. Joe, hosts of the weekly radio program "Veterans' Hour." Because both work for the Employment Service Agency (ESA) — Ron is a disabled veterans outreach worker in Pontiac, and Joe, a veterans employment specialist in Waterford — the program is sponsored by the Department of Labor & Economic Growth.

Veterans' Hour is devoted to helping veterans learn about services available to them in the community. Topics include disability issues, educational benefits, employment assis-

tance, and other service-related benefits. Ron is a retired U.S. Army officer, and Joe was an Army sergeant.

"The show is one of our attempts to reach out to veterans," said Joe. "We also have a focus on employers who are looking to hire former soldiers. This is a one-of-a-kind program."

Veterans' Hour is live, not pre-recorded, and listeners are encouraged to call in with questions or requests. Music is played appropriate to the era and topic being discussed.

In early April, Ron and Joe held an on-the-air "resume interview" with a veteran job seeker. The job seeker had written a letter to ESA describing his plight as a displaced white-collar worker who had become frustrated in his attempts to

find work that would enable him to support his family.

He was referred to Ron Ross for intensive employment services. Ron called the job seeker in for an interview and gave him several job leads. Ron also suggested that the job seeker do a live interview on Veterans' Hour — an innovative way to get his resume out to prospective employers.

By mid-May, the job seeker reported that he had a job conducting seminars on leadership skills. Ron said the job seeker expressed much appreciation for the assistance and renewed energy that Ron and Joe gave to him.

Veterans' Hour can be heard from 4 to 5 p.m. Wednesdays on WPON 1460 AM and also at <http://www.wpon.com>. See a photo of Ron and Joe on page 5.

Veterans Employment Specialists Attend World War II Memorial Dedication



In Washington, D.C.: Gary Bjorkquist; LaDonna Bowen, a former Michigan veterans outreach worker; Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi of California, who is the House Democratic leader; Richard Kryza; and Anthony Carniege, a World War II veteran.

Two Employment Service Agency veterans employment specialists, Gary Bjorkquist and Richard (Rich) Kryza, had a once-in-a-lifetime experience May 29, when they attended the dedication of the new World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Gary and Richard are Vietnam veterans whose fathers were both World War II veterans.

"We shook hands with hundreds of World War II veterans," Gary said. "Our fathers both have passed, so we let the WWII vets in D.C. adopt us."

"It was like a revival, a reunion," said Rich. "WWII veterans were popping up out of their wheelchairs, wearing the old uniforms and bopping around like kids. We will never see another gathering of World War II veterans like this again. The freedoms we have today are because of these men and women and the sacrifices that were made."

Gary and Rich also took time while in Washington to visit the Pentagon, Vietnam Memorial, and Korean Memorial.

New Automated Work Distribution System Is Fully Implemented, Earns National Award

The Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) has taken a major leap forward in improving the efficiency of the workflow for adjudicating problem unemployment claims.

The newly developed automated work distribution system (AWDS) is now up and running in all three of the agency's Remote Initial Claims Centers (RICCs) in Detroit, Saginaw and Grand Rapids and is being used by about 170 UIA staff involved with claims adjudications.

The automated work distribution system started garnering national interest even before the system was fully implemented in UIA. FileNet Corporation named the AWDS project one of its Innovation Award Winners for 2003. Each year FileNet recognizes the contributions made by its worldwide partners and selected AWDS in its government category.

Basically, AWDS is a work router. It automatically assigns claims in need of adjudication to available staff throughout the three RICCs. But AWDS does more than just assign work; it assigns claims to staff according to their ability to do the work. In other words, more involved cases are automatically assigned to staff who have the skill and experience to handle the work. Less difficult cases are assigned to those with less skill and experience.

AWDS also sorts the work in a claims examiner's inbox based on the priority of the work item and when the item is due. The older an item becomes, the closer it moves to the top of the list.

And, claims examiners no longer have to handle paper or track their actions. AWDS is a paperless automated system that tracks cases as they are opened and closed by each examiner. The system also attaches all of the electronic images with each work item, making the stored correspondence and forms easily accessible to staff. It also has links to manuals and procedures that relate to the specific work item, making it easy for staff to locate the reference material needed to complete their work.

Together UIA and Electronic Data Systems (EDS) developed AWDS. UIA staff created and directed the system, while EDS built it. RICC staffs, which are the system's main users, were also deeply involved in the development.

"We wanted all of the potential issues to come up during the development of AWDS," said Linda Karos, director of Internal Benefit Services. "And they did, and the project was ultimately implemented without any serious problems."

Members of the AWDS work group were Linda Karos, Central Support and functional lead; Naomi Baker, Evelina Clark, Carol Dixon, Cheryl Flippen and Shirley Sutton, Detroit RICC; Kathy Debruine, Trelles Strong and Bob Wilkis, Grand Rapids RICC; Linda Friend, Debra Sellner, Lyndon Shinn and Donna Vogel, Saginaw RICC; Alfretta Head, UIA Tech & Data Control; Paula Henige, Appeals; Shaun Thomas, Policy & Procedure; Paul Denean, Multi-Claimant; and Tim Peterson, project manager. The following team conducted user-acceptance testing: Clay Tierney, John Henige, Sue Easton, Angela Miracle and Alfretta Head.

MCTI Graduates 119 Students

The Michigan Career & Technical Institute (MCTI) graduated 119 students from throughout the state on Saturday, June 26. State Representative Fulton Sheen of Plainwell delivered the commencement address.

Operated by Michigan Rehabilitation Services, the school provides vocational training

in 13 career areas for adults with disabilities. The training programs are automotive technology, business support services, cabinetmaking/millwork, culinary arts, custodial, drafting, electronics, grounds maintenance/landscaping, health sciences, machine technology, office automation, printing and retail marketing.



Cindy Thomas of New Haven is a new graduate of MCTI's Culinary Arts program.

Commissioner Watters Surprises OFIS Employees With Special Deliveries

Office of Financial and Insurance Services (OFIS) Commissioner Linda A. Watters recently surprised six OFIS employees by presenting them with Special Deliveries from the

Director in recognition of their excellent work.

Those honored were: Sandra Bechtel and Linda Green, for helping the owner of Reliance Mechanical in Howell resolve a problem with his business insurance; Barbara Streffling and Steve Mayhew, for making what the owner of Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada (U.S.) called an "extraordinary effort" relating to a \$1.7 billion business agreement; Holly Mroz, for outstanding service to the commissioner's office; and Roger Little, for exceptional service as a trainer during a recent Credit Union Supervision Seminar.

Watters told the honorees. "Your contributions are an important part of the excellence that distinguishes Team OFIS," she added. Following the presentation, Commissioner Watters invited all OFIS employees to join her for coffee, donuts and cookies in her conference room.



Pictured, l. to r., are Sandra Bechtel, Linda Green, Linda A. Watters, Roger Little, Holly Mroz and Barbara Streffling.



Steve Mayhew

'Special Delivery from the Director'

I would like to nominate the following staff member to receive a 'Great Job' acknowledgement from Director Hollister



Name of Nominee	Submitted By
Office/Bureau	Classification
Telephone	Office Location

The reason I am nominating this person:

Bureau/Office Director	Date

Bureau/Office Director: Please sign and return to DLEG Media & Public Relations, Ottawa Bldg., 4th Floor, Lansing 48909 - Fax: 517-241-1580

Rehabilitation Counselor Jim Stokes Joins Governor Granholm's Staff

Congratulations to Jim Stokes, a counselor with the Pontiac office of Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), who has accepted a position in the office of Governor Jennifer Granholm.

Jim's new title is deputy director of government affairs and internal office administration for Southeast Michigan. He serves as a liaison to businesses; civic, corporate, and government agencies; and elected officials. He also acts as a surrogate for the governor at events in the southeastern part of the state, where he covers seven counties: Monroe, Washtenaw, Livingston, Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, and St. Clair.

"This is truly a good fit for me as I am able to use all of my education, skill and life experience in this job," he said.

Jim brings a rich background to the position. A graduate of Sacred Heart Seminary College,

Detroit, he has a master's degree in divinity from St. John's Provincial Seminary, Plymouth; a master's degree in guidance and counseling from the University of Detroit; and a juris doctor degree from the Detroit College of Law.

He was named MRS "Counselor of the Year" for Wayne and Oakland counties in 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996 and 2002. He was also granted an honorary bachelor's degree by Orchard Lake Schools/Sts. Cyril and Methodius

College in recognition of counseling and social services provided in the metropolitan Detroit area.

Prior to joining MRS in 1989, Jim interned for two years as a research clerk for Judge Daniel A. Burrell in Livingston County and was an associate pastor for a number of parishes in metro Detroit. Since 1985, he has also been a volunteer board member of the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services.



Teamwork

Three Bureaus Pitch in to Improve Licensure Exams

The Michigan Occupational Safety & Health Administration (MIOSHA) and the Bureau of Construction Codes & Fire Safety (BCCFS) have joined with the Bureau of Commercial Services to update and improve Commercial Services' licensure examinations for residential builders and maintenance and alteration contractors, says Foye Longworth, acting manager of the Testing and Education Services Unit, Licensing Division, Commercial Services.

BCCFS has been involved in the process for well over a decade, Foye said. Charlie Curtis, assistant chief of the Building Division, has been instrumental in updating and revalidating existing Residential Building Code ques-

tions and writing new questions for the examinations.

Tom Swindlehurst, MIOSHA Consultation Education & Training Division, asked last November if MIOSHA could participate in the licensing examination process as well.

The cooperation of these three groups has resulted in a more thorough examination of the license applicant's knowledge of building codes and safety issues in residential construction. It also promotes the department's goal of protecting the health, safety and welfare of Michigan construction workers as well as the public.



Among the many who wished Jackie Steed (center) farewell at her retirement reception were Gwen Spence, director of UIA's Detroit RIC Center, and Gerald Jordan, Department of Information Technology.

Jackie Steed Bids Farewell

Jackie Steed, director of the Office of Trust Fund, Tax and Employer Compliance, Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA), retired in style May 19 when 200 of her friends and co-workers held a reception for her at Cadillac Place in Detroit.

Jackie retired after 24 years with the state, including a stint with the former Department of Mental Health before joining UIA in 1995.

In retirement Jackie will finish work on her Ph.D. in organizational management and leadership and expects to work in the human resources field or teach.

Full Participation by All Citizens Is Goal of Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns



Duncan Wyeth

Let's start this article with a quick quiz:

- 1) Which state agency is the only one in Michigan with a mandate to serve people with all disability characteristics?
- 2) Which state agency introduced a discussion of accessibility in the planning stages of Governor Jennifer Granholm's Cool Cities Initiative?
- 3) Which state agency works to ensure communication access by people who are deaf or hard of hearing?

The Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns is comprised of 21 commissioners, each appointed by the governor for three-year terms. Commissioners represent a variety of disability characteristics and come from all geographic regions of the state. They meet quarterly. MCDC's executive director and staff are employees of the Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth.

For more information on MCDC, call toll-free, 1-877-499-6232 (voice/TTY).

Was your answer the Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns (MCDC) for all three questions? If so, you get an "A."

Duncan Wyeth, who has advocated on behalf of persons with disabilities for more than 30 years, is MCDC's executive director.

"In Michigan, there are 1.9 million people who, under state and federal laws, are defined as persons with disabilities," said Duncan. "For Michigan's future to be healthy and vital, we need to pursue courses of action that ensure that all 1.9 million of these individuals can fully participate in all of the programs, services and activities that are afforded to every other citizen in our large and diverse state."

Duncan said MCDC advocates this philosophy through an array of programs that touch not only persons with disabilities, but also business owners, workplace supervisors and policy makers.

"MCDC's signature event is our annual Youth Leadership Forum in June, when high school students with disabilities from throughout the state visit the Capitol to learn to become future leaders," Duncan said.

MCDC also participates in two other programs that benefit youth — national Disability Mentoring Day, when students are matched with employers based on their career goals, and the new MI CONNECTIONS grant program that introduces young people with disabilities to high-tech careers.

Duncan also notes these vital MCDC programs:

- With nearly one million Michiganders who are deaf or hard of hearing, MCDC operates the Division on Deaf and Hard of Hearing, which specifically concentrates on improving their lives through information and referral, accommodations, and interpreter information and support.

- MCDC is one of the five key partners identified in Governor Granholm's executive order to fully implement state and federal disability rights laws in Michigan government.

- MCDC staff and its partner agencies provide sensitivity and awareness training to help people better understand attitudinal and environmental barriers faced by persons with disabilities. Some 170 managers in the Department of Management & Budget recently received this training. Duncan said the training will be replicated for DLEG supervisors.

- Employment Opportunity Workshops, a collaborative effort between MCDC and the Family Independence Agency, assist people with disabilities who have been exempted from participating in government programs that help people transition from welfare to work. "We try to reach people with disabilities who have been on public assistance and who don't perceive themselves as being able to go to work," said Cheryl Mattson, an MCDC analyst who coordinates the program.

- Michigan Business Leaders Networks (MBLN) are efforts to enlist the participation of employers who can speak to other employers about the benefits of ADA and of hiring workers with disabilities. A Detroit-based MBLN is currently being developed.

"In MCDC, we have an opportunity to take the broad view and recognize that a disability affects the entire family," Duncan said. "Accessibility issues impact family members in areas such as where the family lives, the type of transportation they use, the school district they choose, and even where they go for recreation. Our role is to complement the employment services offered by the Michigan Commission for the Blind and Michigan Rehabilitation Services. As we focus on making Michigan accessible for all citizens, we contribute to the state's economic growth."

UIA's Advocacy Program Improves Workload Tracking

The Unemployment Insurance Agency's Advocacy program has significantly improved the way it tracks its workload through a new Oracle database system. Implemented in early April, the system tracks all of the cases that are opened and closed by program advocates. It also handles billings from advocates for their services.

The Advocacy program, which is unique to Michigan, offers independent advocates to help unemployed workers and employers with hearings before administrative law judges or the Michigan Employment Security Board of Review. At no cost to the employer or worker, the advocates provide information, consultation and representation services.

The new Oracle system replaces an Access database system and is already proving to be much faster, easier and more reliable. When requests for Advocacy assistance come in, staff members data-enter the requests into the Oracle database. Oracle then opens the cases and assigns numbers to them. After accepting a case, the advocate notifies program staff, and the case is assigned. Once work on the case is completed, the advocate contacts program staff, who data-enter information into Oracle, which then closes the case.

The system also maintains an updated list of advocates and rotates the names each time a list is printed to ensure that every advocate's name appears at the top of the list sooner. A list of advocates and their profiles is prepared whenever the program receives a request for assistance. The requestor uses the list and profiles to select an advocate. In addition, Oracle automatically prepares information letters to both parties when a case is opened and prints the proper program fact sheet for mailing to the party requesting Advocacy services.

Billie Banks, an analyst with the Advocacy program, worked with an Oracle contractor to implement the program and also gave one-on-one training to all staff members to help them learn and use the program.



Billie Banks (right) points out one of the features of the new Oracle system to Maureen Michalski, Advocacy manager.

Commission on Disability Concerns Coordinates Youth Leadership Forum



Thirty-four high school students with disabilities from throughout the state participated in a unique leadership training program at Michigan State University June 13-17, coordinated by DLEG's Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns (MCDC). This was the fifth year of the Michigan Youth Leadership Forum.

The student participants were introduced to disability history and the Americans with Disabilities Act, self-advocacy concepts, how

a bill becomes law, and employment issues, including mock interviews. One day was spent at the Capitol, where the students debated a disability issue. Successful adults with disabilities served as mentors in their roles as program presenters and small group leaders.

"This annual program gives young people an opportunity to learn about public service in our state's capital," DLEG Director David C. Hollister said. "I think this hands-on approach is one of the best ways high school students can prepare to be leaders in their local communities and eventually at the state level."

We Get Letters ... and E-Mails!

We are pleased each month to publish complimentary letters, notes, cards, phone calls and e-mail messages sent to DLEG employees from external agencies and organizations and the general public. Send, fax or e-mail them to Lynne Breen, DLEG Media & Public Relations, P.O. Box 30004, Lansing, MI 48909; (517) 241-1580 (fax); breenl@michigan.gov.



Bruce Weaver, acting director, Office of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives, received the following letter from **Bob Thelen**, chief training officer, Capital Area Michigan Works!: "This year I taught four Career Development Facilitation Certification programs. This included two in the Calhoun area, one in Lansing and one in Flint. I asked **Erica Nakfoor** to be a guest speaker on Labor Market Information for all four. Erica was always very well prepared. She developed a PowerPoint presentation on the key areas we had agreed she would cover and

was very confident when making her presentation. I always looked forward to her presentation because I knew she would be well received by the class. She was able to make the information relevant to their jobs, which for most of them was working in a Michigan Works! Service Center. Erica always received outstanding evaluations. I believe the Department of Labor & Economic Growth is fortunate to have someone like Erica Nakfoor representing them. She is a highly professional and talented individual."

Rick Talton, a counselor at the Detroit Grand River office of Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) received this letter: "I would like to thank you and MRS for your services in helping me receive equipment for my van to help me become more independent in my everyday life and, most important, to help me maintain my job as a graphic artist. I have been on time to my job,

become more dependable to my department, and life itself has become a little bit less of a challenge. I hope in the near future I will be able to add on to my van equipment, where I would be able to drive myself. I would like to keep you informed of my progress, and I will send you some of my illustrations."

This letter was sent to **Steve Hill**, manager of the Detroit West District, MRS, complimenting two employees at the Detroit Grand River Office: "I am writing you this letter to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to participate in your job search program that proved to be a most grat-

ifying and positive experience. I would also like to thank Ms. **Deborah Bradley**, who kept me focused, and a very special thanks to Ms. **Marsha Florence**, who was determined to get us re-employed, believing in ourselves, and becoming productive members of the community."

Suellen Cook, Consultation Education & Training (CET) Division, Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA), recently made a presentation called "Ergonomic Principles for Workplace Assessment and Design" at the University of Michigan. The director of

Continuing Education sent a thank-you letter, saying, "Your presentation was excellent and provided a valuable insight into how different patient care facilities have successfully utilized ergonomics to improve workplaces for their employees."

A letter from the Michigan Safe School Initiative Workgroup commended **Debra Gundrey**, consultant, CET Division, MIOSHA, for the helpful presentation she recently made and

the informative CET materials she provided. Debra also received positive feedback on the program evaluations; participants said they appreciated and benefited from her remarks.

Howard Simmons, safety consultant, CET Division, MIOSHA, has worked with several Standard Lumber locations. The company's spokesman wrote a letter to Supervisor **Felix Acevedo**, stating, "I know I mentioned this to you

on the phone when we spoke, but it bears repeating. We very much enjoyed working with Mr. Simmons during the process at all locations. He was very helpful with all of our questions. We appreciated his input and this valuable service."

[More] Letters ... and E-Mails!

John Peck, Management & Technical Services Division, MIOSHA, received a letter from a Michigan attorney regarding the exemplary work of **Lisa Leik**, Freedom of Information Unit: "I was in trial preparation for a case involving my two clients who had been terminated from their jobs for making a safety violation complaint ... My assistant contacted your office just prior to the start of trial in early April and spoke with

Lisa Leik. Lisa was extremely thorough, helpful and very knowledgeable about the questions we had and how to obtain copies of documents I needed for trial. This is a letter to compliment Lisa and your staff for the fine work they did in responding to our 'last minute' request. Everything was timely received and was very helpful to my trial preparation. I appreciate the excellent assistance we received from the Department."



Sharon Howell, Cosmetology Licensing Unit, Commercial Services, received the following note regarding her assistance to a cosmetology shop applicant: "If you get this, or your manager, I just

want them to know how pleasant and helpful you've been for me in this process. You're great and I appreciate it. Thanks!"

Rita Burnett, Real Estate Section, Licensing Division, Commercial Services, received this note: "Rita — Just a note to say thanks for the timely

response in sending my Michigan real estate information to me here in Georgia. It was a pleasure dealing with you!"

Sheena Delgado, student assistant in the Builder's Unit, Commercial Services, assisted a caller with a license verification. At the end of the conversation, the caller said to Sheena, "You

are the easiest department to talk to. It's very easy to get the information I need from you. You should win the 'Best Department of the State Award.'"

Susan Hensley, Cosmetology Licensing Unit, Commercial Services, received the following e-mail message after she had assisted an appli-

cant: "Thank you for all your help — you always find an answer for us and it is appreciated."

An excerpt from a letter to **Jan Booth**, field auditor, Unemployment Insurance Agency, from an unemployed worker in Lake Orion: "Lately, I have been going through a great deal of stress. I wanted to tell you that if it was you that called me and left the message on my voice mail, that I appreciated your words in my situation. It wasn't just the fact that you may have given me a bit of good news, in

a dismal day, but it was 'the way' you did it, or your attitude of the message that really helped me that day. My immediate impression was that you not only cared about your job, and maybe people in general, but that you are the type of person that lightens or gives to others, rather than darkening or taking from others, like so many these days. I just want to tell you thank you, sincerely."

If You Have a Loved One in the Service ...

A poster featuring photographs of DLEG employees in the military and employee family members in the military is being designed by Graphic Artist Jim Kremer in Media & Public Relations. Please send photos, including name of individual, branch of service, name and job title of employee, and relationship to employee to: KremerJ@michigan.gov or to Jim at the Ottawa Building, 4th floor. Copies of the poster will be distributed throughout the department and made available to interested persons.

Professional Activities & Community Service

Congratulations to **Yvette Robinson**, Enforcement Division, Commercial Services, who was honored at the East Lansing Historical Society's 13th annual awards program on May 19. The

program recognizes those who have furthered East Lansing's history. Yvette had participated in two society programs—"Let's Remember December 7" and "The Forgotten War: Korea."

Suzanne Jolicoeur, licensing administrator, and **Ed Kisscorni**, accountancy board chair, Commercial Services, made a joint presentation May 12 before the Michigan Association of Certified Public Accountants (MACPA) Spring Members' Advisory Forum on Michigan's response to the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, the landmark accounting reform legislation.

They also provided an update on the computerized exam and 150-hour educational requirement for precicensure. MACPA Director **Peggy Dzierzawski** reported that the presentations were well received by attendees and considered by many to be the most important information attendees received at the daylong conference.

Congratulations to **Thelma Clark**, site manager of the Detroit Grand River office, Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), who received a Ph.D. in Christian counseling from Logos Christian College and Graduate School,

Jacksonville, Florida, in May. In addition, the Michigan Certification Board for Addiction Professions granted addiction counselor certifications (CACs) I and II to Thelma in April.

If you notice a new sign on U.S. 127 in Ingham County that reads "**James M. Pelton** Firefighters Memorial Highway," please know that **Julie O'Brien**, staff development manager, MRS, was the person who spearheaded the effort to have this stretch of highway named for Mr. Pelton. Fire chief for the city of Mason for many years, Mr. Pelton died in the line of duty on

August 10, 2001. Julie, a Mason resident, began a letter-writing campaign that culminated in the highway dedication ceremony May 7 when Governor **Jennifer Granholm** unveiled the new sign. Approximately 100 persons attended the event, including State Representative **Dianne Byrum**, who publicly thanked Julie for her heartfelt efforts to honor Mr. Pelton.

Congratulations to **Jennie Tunnell**, manager of the Macomb County District, MRS, and **Eudora McKinney**, site manager of MRS's Roseville office, who were honored June 16 at the 4th annual ATHENA Awards Banquet held in Shelby Township. An international program, the

ATHENA Awards are given to women who are recognized for their commitment and dedication to human services and community involvement as well as their unique leadership skills and ability to mentor other women.

Irene Wright, site manager of MRS's Pontiac office, has been appointed to serve a three-year term on the City of Pontiac Zoning Board

of Appeals. State Representative **Clarence Phillips** recommended Irene for the post.

Congratulations to **Tony Casaletta**, Construction Safety & Health Division, Michigan Occupational Safety & Health

Administration (MIOSHA), for successfully completing his master of science degree in occupational health at Wayne State University.

Congratulations to **Bill Lykes**, Consultation Education & Training (CET) Division, MIOSHA, who recently earned a master of

science degree in administration from Central Michigan University.

[More] Professional Activities & Community Service

In early May, Safety Consultant **Lee Jay Kueppers**, CET Division, MIOSHA, facilitated a one-day Fireworks Seminar in Bay City for 80 fire service staff from across the state. Bay City was selected because, according to its fire chief, it has one of the largest Fourth of July fireworks displays in the country. The seminar represented great interagency collaboration,

with presenters from the Michigan State Police; the U.S. Coast Guard; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; and the American Pyrotechnics Association. This program was the sixth annual seminar facilitated by Lee Jay — just in time for fire departments to supervise safe summer holiday displays.

Congratulations to **Greg Kozak**, CET Division, MIOSHA, for successfully passing the American Board of Industrial Hygiene (ABIH)

Certified Industrial Hygienist (CIH) examination. Greg is now certified in the comprehensive practice of industrial hygiene.

Consultant **Quenten Yoder**, CET Division, MIOSHA, recently conducted a seminar in Jackson called “Strategies for Accident Prevention and Workers’ Compensation.”

The positive comments sent back included: “Quenten has such a wealth of information,” “wonderful program” and “please have more classes in this area so we can attend.”

Kha-Lihah Cross, a student assistant in the Real Estate Licensing Unit, Commercial Services, recently suggested some changes to the Verification of Attendance form for real estate continuing education. Her ideas are being tested with continuing education spon-

sors prior to implementation. “Kha-Lihah demonstrated superior initiative in asking if she could redesign the form, and this demonstrates one more reason why we’re so glad to have her!” said Licensing Administrator **Ann Millben**.

Fighting Against Breast Cancer

Barbara Campbell, executive secretary to Andy Metcalf, director of the Bureau of Commercial Services, has set an ambitious goal for this year. She describes it this way:

“Please help support me as I take an amazing journey in the fight against breast cancer by participating in the Breast Cancer 3-Day! The Breast Cancer 3-Day is a 60-mile walk (Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti to St. Mary’s College in Orchard Lake) over the course

of three days (August 20–22, 2004). My goal is to raise \$2,000, which will benefit the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation and the National Philanthropic Trust, funding important breast cancer research, education, screening and treatment.

“Contact me to obtain a donation form or you can donate directly into my account (Barbara Campbell — Grand Ledge, MI) at <http://www.breastcancer3day.org>.

“Thank you for your support.”



DLEG Employees Host Third Annual Student Awards Program

Twenty-three Michigan students who are entering careers not usually associated with their gender were recognized May 18 by the Department of Labor & Economic Growth as role models for other students considering nontraditional careers.

More than 100 family members, teachers, legislators and friends attended the "Breaking Traditions" awards ceremony for the honored students. It was held at the Capitol Rotunda.

In its third year, the program recognizes young women entering such diverse fields as heavy equipment operation, police work and welding, as well as young men entering

the fields of dental hygiene, nursing and office assistant.

Career Education Programs Director Deb LaPine served as program emcee. Patty Cantú, director of the Office of Career & Technical Preparation (OCTP), and Norma Tims, gender equity consultant and Title IX coordinator, OCTP, were the award presenters.

Assisting with the planning of the event were Pamela Hodges, Carrie Martin and Nicole Smith with OCTP, and Jeannie Vogel, Gina DiNatale Coon, Cindy Blanche, Susan Turney, Linda Cook, Paula Stevens, Nancy Benjamin and Jim Kremer, all with Media & Public Relations.

Thank you to all other staff from OCTP and Postsecondary Services who reviewed the applications.



Ashley Chrumka (center) of Farmington High School, pursuing a career in architectural drawing and design, was one of 23 students honored at the Capitol on May 18. Norma Tims (left) and Patty Cantú of OCTP presented the awards.

Michigan State Housing Development Authority Affordable Housing Conference Attendees Get Preview of Cool Cities Survey Data

The 6th annual Michigan Conference on Affordable Housing, held May 17–19 at the Lansing Center, provided a "sneak preview" of survey data from Governor Jennifer Granholm's Cool Cities Initiative.

Research highlights of an electronic survey filled out by 13,500 college-age students, primarily from Michigan, were shared by David Morris of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC).

The responses revealed that young people want to live in places that fit their lifestyles — they want walkable streets with lots of gathering places, a place to raise a family and a diverse population.

A complete summary of the findings is being posted on the new Cool Cities Web site at <http://www.coolcities.com>.

Bob Johnson, senior executive assistant director of DLEG, recapped some of the highlights of

the past year that have created the "buzz" around the Cool Cities Initiative.

Attendance at the conference topped 1,500 people for two and a half days, making it the largest conference of its kind in the country. A 32-member planning committee works all year to bring together scores of sessions and topical informational keynote presentations, said Mary Lou Keenon of the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA).

Sponsored by more than 25 organizations, the annual conference draws persons advocating for affordable quality housing, appropriate shelter for those faced with homelessness, and revitalized large and small communities.

Next year's conference will be held May 16–18, also at the Lansing Center.

Employees on the Move

The Wage & Hour Division has named **Jill Hookey** as its new manager for Region I, which includes most of the state except for Southeast Michigan. Jill has worked for the state of Michigan for 13 years, including 11 as an investigator for the division. She is a graduate of Michigan State University. Congratulations, Jill!



Jill Hookey

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) has promoted **Christine (Tina) Fullerton** to site manager of the Gaylord MRS office. Tina has been a rehabilitation counselor for MRS since 1992. A graduate of Central Michigan University, she has a master's degree in Guidance & Counseling, also from CMU. Congratulations to Tina!



Tina Fullerton

The Management & Technical Service Division of the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA) has named **Mary Ann Howe** departmental manager for budget, grants and the Freedom of Information Unit. Mary Ann has worked for MIOSHA for 16 years, the last seven as a rights representative with Employee Discrimination. Congratulations, Mary Ann!

Congratulations to **Bob Beitel**, Construction Safety & Health Division, MIOSHA, who has been reallocated to the senior safety officer classification.

The Department of Labor & Economic Growth welcomes five new staff members.

Susan Bannister has joined the Workers' Compensation Agency (WCA) in its Pontiac office, where she will provide secretarial and office management support to three magistrates and one mediator. New to state government, Susan has ten years' experience as an administrative assistant ... **Kathryn Witchell** has joined WCA's Customer Service Unit, where she facilitates dispute resolution under the Health Care Services Rules and assists customers on the agency's toll-free line. Kathryn has 15 years' experience as a workers' compensation adjuster in the insurance industry

... **Lavonne Blonde** has joined WCA's Self-Insured Programs Division as secretary for all division staff. Lavonne began working for the state in January 2000 as a data-coding operator with WCA's Compliance & Employer

Records Division ... **Kevin Worden** has joined the Occupational Health Laboratory, MIOSHA, as quality assurance officer. Kevin had been with the Department of Agriculture for the past 13 years ... and **Rebecca Ramezyk** of Farmington Hills is Michigan Rehabilitation Services' newest counselor. Rebecca has joined the MRS field office in Pontiac.

Several DLEG employees have left the department for new challenges. **Jenelle Thelen**, industrial hygienist with the Consultation Education & Training Division (CET), MIOSHA, has bid farewell after four and a half years ... **Judy Mintz**, onsite health consultant with MIOSHA's CET Division, has departed for the private sector ... and **Laura Campbell**, Management & Technical Service Division, MIOSHA, has accepted a transfer to the Workers' Compensation Appellate Commission, where she worked prior to joining MIOSHA. Best wishes to Jenelle, Judy and Laura in their new endeavors!



Kathryn Witchell



Lavonne Blonde

Michigan Regional Skills Alliances Grant Initiative Announced



MiRSA

**Michigan Regional
Skills Alliances**

*Partnerships for
Workforce Solutions*

On May 10, Governor Jennifer Granholm and DLEG Director David Hollister announced plans for the development of Michigan Regional Skills Alliances (MiRSAs) — part of the governor's seven-point plan to make Michigan an economic powerhouse state of the 21st century.

MiRSAs are locally managed partnerships that are unique to groups of firms operating in the same industry within a specific region. Otherwise highly competitive businesses will work collaboratively to identify strategies for developing a highly skilled workforce and resolving issues such as worker shortages, skill shortages, training mismatches and employee recruitment and retention.

With the support of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, DLEG is providing one-year startup grants totaling \$1,050,000 for the initial development of up to 12 MiRSAs across

the state. Grant announcements will be made in late August.

DLEG staff held seven MiRSA pre-bid workshops recently in Detroit, Escanaba, Flint, Gaylord, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo and Lansing. Several hundred participants from business and industry, education, economic development organizations, organized labor, and community-based organizations attended the workshops, which were designed to bring regional partners together.

DLEG staff working on the MiRSA grant program are: Louis Adams, MRS; Marcia Black-Watson, Bureau of Workforce Programs; Diana Carpenter, Labor Market Information & Strategic Initiatives; Ardis Cazeno, Employment Service Agency (ESA) Labor Exchange Services; Janice Cooper, Office of Workforce Development (OWD); Brenda Ely, ESA; Vicki Enright, OWD;

Jim Folkening, Postsecondary Services; Janet Howard, OWD; Deb LaPine, Career Education Programs; Abby Meyer, ESA; Brenda Njiwaji, Bureau of Workforce Programs; Sue Schaible, Bureau of Workforce Programs; Carole Sorensen, Labor Market Information & Strategic Initiatives; Dennis Sykes, Executive Office; Susan Turney, Media & Public Relations; Wes Van Malsen, Purchasing & Grants; Jeannie Vogel, Media & Public Relations; Bruce Weaver, Labor Market Information & Strategic Initiatives; Stephen Woods, Labor Market Information & Strategic Initiatives; and Irma Zuckerberg, Executive Office.

The team also includes staff from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, the Upjohn Institute, Public Policy Associates, Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, and a representative from the Michigan State Building and Construction Trades Council.

UIA Works to Grow Michigan



Detroit RICC staff at Cadillac Place, Detroit, participating in one of the Grow Michigan meetings. Seated at forward table, clockwise from 8 o'clock, are Candra Gissendanner, Denae Chew, Jackie Morris, Juanita Glover, and Mary Conte. Seated at back table, clockwise from 12 o'clock, are Barbara Peeples, Patricia Jones and Ronald Romano.

With more than 1,000 employees, the Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) may hold the record for hosting more Grow Michigan meetings than any other bureau within the department.

UIA held 45 Grow Michigan meetings for its employees throughout the state as a follow-up to the Vision and Values workshops held last fall and as a response to Governor Jennifer Granholm's seven-point plan for Michigan.

Staff were given an opportunity to plan UIA's major goals, with measurable objectives, and

to ensure these goals align with the governor's plan for the state as well as with the department's objectives. UIA's major initiatives for the year include eliminating the adjudications backlog, redesigning the agency's major automated systems, improving internal and external communications, taking steps to guarantee the integrity of the UIA program, training staff and servicing agency customers.

All agencies and bureaus within DLEG have developed strategic action plans, to be followed up by quarterly progress reports.